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CLOSING REMARKS

BY

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AT THE

WORKSHOP TO DEVELOP THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND
THE OPERATIONAL PLAN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE

8-12 JULY 2013

DEBRE ZEIT, ETHIOPIA

Once again I thank all of you for your coming and especially for your active participation in this Workshop in a manner than generated valuable ideas for the development of our Departmental Strategic Plan and Operational Plan within the context of the Strategic Plan of the African Union Commission that was adopted by the AU Assembly in May 2013.

I noted with appreciation the way we reviewed progress of implementation of the work plans set for the year 2013 and our budget execution for the first half of the year. Here, I thank those of you who put together, in a team spirit, the presentations. I am sure you all recall how each office, division and unit under DREA, indicating what they each planned, the achievements they registered and the success factors thereof, the challenges they encountered, the efforts they undertook to overcome them, unfinished business and the way forward including lessons learnt. Some of these were unique to situations but quite a number were shared. And I am sure you will agree with me that the discussions that followed each presentation was lively and constructive. I also thank you Director for ably moderating the sessions.

I noted that much of the implementation was found to be on track while some of the programmes had delayed owing to late release or unavailability of funds by partners considering that 99.9% of our

programme budget is donor-funded. I also noted that besides financial resources, human resource capacities were overstretched and the pace of recruitment was slowed by procedural and structural factors at Commission level.

It was also exciting to look at the lessons learnt from developing and implementing the DREA Strategic Plan 2010-2012 to improve our planning and implementation of the next Strategic Plan, including the emphasis on monitoring and evaluation. This forms a firm foundation for our formulation of the new Strategic Plan.

I also believe we will all come out of this workshop with a broad mind given the overview of the key components of the AUC Strategic Plan 2014-2017 as a whole including the AUC Vision, Mission, the five pillars, eight priorities, seven outcomes, 35 outputs and 168 strategic actions.

I was pleased to see how you all engaged in thorough discussion of these outputs, the seriousness with which you conducted break-out sessions to deepen understanding and concretise input into our Departmental Strategic Plan and Operational Plan. This was a worthwhile exercise as we were able to come up with guidelines on:

- (i) how each staff and unit could strengthen indicators to measure and report performance towards contributing to the four relevant output areas through corresponding strategic actions;
- (ii) how the units and divisions could be better structured to respond more adequately to the mandate of the Department bearing in mind the ongoing Commission-wide structural review;
- (iii) how the Department could enhance synergies with other Departments of the AUC and other partner institutions such as RECs and NPCA.

I now feel confidence that the Debre Zeit Workshop will craft the initial draft of the DREA Strategic Plan and Operational Plan that we shall be discussing with our key stakeholders and partners at the Retreat planned for later this year.

And also keeping with our tradition of multi-tasking, it was great to have the reflection we had on planning for the 2014 AU Year of Agriculture and Food Security as well as Preparations for the Yearlong Commemoration of the OAU/AU 50th Anniversary. I also trust that whenever you got time you were able to check your mail and keep tabs on what is going on in your respective schedules and given the multiplicity of upcoming high-level engagements. That is the spirit we need to uphold.

I also believe this coming together also helped to enhance our team spirit and mutual appreciation which are key for our enhanced delivery on our mandate. Indeed, the session on staff matters was also helpful in this regard.

With these few remarks, I wish you successful conclusion of the Workshop and I look forward to our continued refinement of the issues that have been generated at this Workshop so that our Strategic Plan and Operational Plan come out as a truly guiding document for our work in the period 2014-2017.

Thank you.